

What varieties of “resistance” do we see manifest in the article by Mazower, and the three primary sources assigned this week?

World War II and the reign of the Nazi regime presented severe challenges and threats to the Jewish population, among others. As explored in the works of Mazower, Cohen, Stein, and Hillesaum, both Jews and non-Jews in this context employed a broad variety of strategies to resist oppression of the Third Reich. These strategies include overt forms of resistance such as active non-compliance, facilitating escape plans, and strategic manipulation of information, as well as more covert forms, like bribery, provision of aid, and nurturing an internal spirit of defiance.

A spectrum of overt forms of resistance manifested in both Jews and non-Jews, including non-compliance, facilitating escape plans, and strategic handling of information. One prevalent form of resistance was civil disobedience. Despite increasing pressure from their powerful Nazi allies, Italians declined to deport Jews from their territories (Mazower 240). Similarly, Jews demonstrated their defiance by withholding compliance, even with life-threatening mandates. One example is found in Athens, where only 1,200 Jews out of an estimated 8,000 complied with the mandated registration, thereby resisting the threat of execution (Mazower 251). Aiding in the evasion of Nazi authorities served as another significant resistance strategy. When German authorities accosted the Grand Rabbi of Athens and ordered him to provide information about the Jewish community to expedite their deportations, Kostas Vidalis from the EAM organized and escape plan and successfully managed to smuggle the Rabbi from the Nazis, saving the lives of hundreds if not thousands of Jews (Mazower 250). International aid also played a part, as seen in the actions of Zamboni, the Italian consul in Salonika. He garnered support from fellow Italians in assisting the southern exodus of as many Jews as possible (Mazower 248). Finally, the control

and dissemination of information emerged as a powerful resistance tool. The aforementioned escape of the Grand Rabbi of Athens is an example of Jews safeguarding information from German authorities to save each other. On the other hand, an example of the dissemination of information as a form of resistance is when the Dutch resistance illegally published Etty Hillesaums' letter illegally to rally determination against the Third Reich in the Netherlands (Rittner and Roth 48). Thus, the repertoire of active resistance strategies against the Nazi regime included active disobedience, facilitating escape plans, and strategic information management. These methods were employed by both Jews and non-Jews alike.

Numerous instances of resistance were less overt, involving subtler forms of defiance like bribery, offering aid, and maintaining an internal spirit of resistance. For example, a community of elders skillfully negotiated their way out of the mobilization decree in Salonika, successfully securing the release of 7,000 Jewish laborers. They did so by bribing the German army with a massive sum of money made possible through the collective contributions of Jewish communities outside the city (Mazower 239). Aid extended to Jews came in various forms, often not as grandiose as organized escape but still crucial to their survival. One instance of such assistance is the relentless support a friend offered to Jamila Kolonomos, a Jewish girl in the Macedonian resistance. He saved her life on five separate occasions, literally dragging her along whenever she fell behind (Stein and Cohen 281). In another act of solidarity, the townsfolk of Lefkada defied German orders to provide sustenance to Jews held captive under deplorable conditions. They attempted to sneak in bread and vegetables through the barbed wire fence that encased the detainees (Mazower 255). When all else was taken from them, some Jews survived through internal resistance and defiance. Etty Hillesaum narrates the story of a woman who remained unaffected by her cruel circumstances, including her stint in the punishment block and

imminent deportation. The woman stood for hours on end, as commanded by the guards, not just out of compulsion but as a silent act of defiance, maintaining her dignity in the face of oppression (Rittner and Roth 52). Therefore, when overt resistance was not possible, Jews and their allies employed more subtle, covert methods of resistance against the oppressive Nazi regime.

As lectures and Bergen's chapter suggest, the Nazi Empire only intensified its genocidal campaign as Germany's losses at war mounted. What does this teach us about the relationship between war and genocide in the context of the Second World War?

The escalation of the Nazi Empire's genocidal campaign as Germany's military position worsened during World War II unveils a complex relationship between the dynamics of war and the mechanisms of genocide. As Germany faced increased losses on the battlefield, the Nazi leadership responded by intensifying their pursuit of the 'Final Solution', a course of action driven by a distorted ideology and a sense of desperation. Yet, it's crucial to note that the intensity and success of this genocidal campaign varied across different regions, influenced by factors such as the nature of political occupation, war timing, geographical conditions, and the responses of local leadership. These varying experiences illustrate the multifaceted interplay between war and genocide, showing us that the progression and severity of genocide can be significantly shaped by the unfolding context of warfare.

In regions directly under Nazi control or those managed by its proxy regimes, anti-Jewish policies were enforced more stringently, causing elevated mortality rates. On the other hand, territories controlled by Nazi allies or not directly under German rule generally experienced lower death rates. An insightful example can be drawn from the Jewish survival rates in North Africa. Algeria, being legally part of France, had limited power to protect its Jewish population due to stronger Nazi control. Conversely, neighboring Tunisia and Morocco, both French protectorates but not formally part of France, saw more successful efforts by their respective rulers to resist anti-Semitic policies (Sarah Stein, "North Africa," 2023). Moreover, Jews living in territories controlled by Nazi allies, such as Bulgaria, fared better due to these countries leveraging their favorable relations with the Nazi regime to safeguard their Jewish citizens.

Bulgaria, for example, was able to use its favor with the Nazi regime to protect its Jewish population at the expense of the stateless Jews in Macedonia and Thrace. As a result, 98% of Bulgarian Jews survived the war (Sarah Stein, "Southern Europe," 2023). The timing of the occupation was also crucial; Nazi failures earlier in the war inspired increased brutality in other places later in the war. For example, the occupation in Greece occurred right after the successful mass flight of Jews in Denmark, leading German authorities to be extra strict in their enforcement of antisemitic laws (Sarah Stein, "Southern Europe," 2023). This timing was part of the reason that a staggering 98% of Greek Jews perished.

Furthermore, geographical characteristics and local leadership significantly influenced survival rates. For instance, France's mountainous terrain facilitated escapes, contributing to a survival rate of 75% of its Jewish population. Fewer German personnel were sent to more remote and mountainous areas of France, allowing a sixth of native-born Jews to escape by foot to Spain or Switzerland (Sarah Stein, "France," 2023). The proximity of neighboring countries willing to accept Jewish refugees also played a pivotal role. Denmark, with an open door to Sweden, witnessed a 98% survival rate among Jews, whereas Greece, lacking similar escape routes, saw a grim 98% extermination rate (Sarah Stein, "Southern Europe," 2023). Comparison between Denmark and the Netherlands, two countries of similar sizes and geographies, highlights the impact of local leadership and their willingness to cooperate with Nazi Germany. In the Netherlands, the Dutch police assisted the Germans in executing deportation orders, while the Dutch ministry refrained from intervening against actions taken against its Jewish citizens. This resulted in a 75% extermination rate among the Dutch Jews. Contrastingly, Danish authorities firmly defended the rights of their Jewish population, deterring immediate action by the Nazis and leading to a high survival rate (Sarah Stein, "Southern Europe," 2023). Therefore, the

factors of political control, war timing, geography, and local leadership's compliance are central to understanding the link between war and genocide in the context of World War II.

References

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Etty Hillesaum, "A Letter from Westerbork," in Rittner and Roth, eds., *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*, pp. 46-57 (PD).

Sarah Stein, "France," HIST 5 (lecture, UCLA, 2023)

Sarah Stein, "North Africa," HIST 5 (lecture, UCLA, 2023)

Sarah Stein, "Northern Europe," HIST 5 (lecture, UCLA, 2023)

Sarah Stein, "Southern Europe," HIST 5 (lecture, UCLA, 2023)

Sarah Stein, "War and Genocide," HIST 5 (lecture, UCLA, 2023)